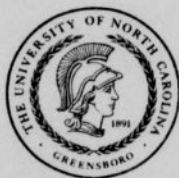


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The purposes of the study were to investigate:

- (1) the need for a child care center in a small textile community; (2) the type of center the parents preferred; and
- (3) the treatment and services expected from such centers.

The study was limited to 50 mothers who had children of preschool age and who lived in Cramerton, North Carolina. An interview schedule based on the review of literature was developed to ascertain the three objectives. A personal data sheet was included for obtaining demographic information.

The interview schedule and the personal data sheet were administered to the subjects in their homes. After two attempts were made to contact the randomly selected respondents, twenty-two substitutions were made.

The findings of the study in relation to the need for a center were: 56 per cent of the children were of preschool age; and various child care arrangements were used by parents. Forty-eight per cent of the mothers were employed, but 81 per cent of the unemployed mothers said that they would become employed if suitable child care were available. Only nine of the 50 mothers had enrolled their children in centers. Ninety-four per cent of the mothers said that they would use a center if one were available. The mothers preferred centers which: (a) adjoined their place of

employment; (b) were licensed and sponsored by churches; (c) employed men and women teachers who were certified or who worked with a trained leader; (d) could be used for other activities in addition to child care; (e) were available 24 hours a day for at least six days a week; (f) would operate twelve months a year; (g) had educational activities as well as play activities for children; and (d) would help parents in principles of child development.

Treatments expected were: (a) personnel should use strict discipline; (b) parents would help with the work at the center, and should help the staff determine the hours and days the center was open; (c) health of the child should be considered; (d) at least two meals and a snack should be served; (e) children from the ages of six months to five years should be allowed to enroll, but they should be grouped according to age; and (f) fees should be the same for all children.

Conclusions were: (a) concerned citizens should encourage the organization of a committee to consider possibilities; (b) the number of preschool children, the employed mothers, the mothers who stressed that they would use the center should be considered when deciding the need for the center; (c) the reasons for using the center should be considered in choosing the type and location of the building; and (d) parents' suggestions should be considered when planning the program and in hiring the staff.

MOTHERS' OPINIONS REGARDING  
CHILD CARE CENTERS FOR  
PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

by

Johnie D. Reece

A Thesis Submitted to  
the Faculty of the Graduate School at  
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro  
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Approved by

Nancy White  
Thesis Adviser

APPROVAL SHEET

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Some of the current conditions affecting families and children are increasing urbanization, rising living costs, employment of mothers, and, in many locations, a shortage of child care centers. Millions of mothers are working and many more would like to work. Society needs the services of these working mothers. Society, in return, should help working mothers to give full attention to their tasks by providing child care facilities for their children.

Dittman (1967) stated that ". . . eight percent of all the children, or nearly a million children, were expected to look after themselves while their mothers are working (p. 8)." According to Bernstein (1967), "By 1980, 5.3 million mothers between 20 and 44 with children under five will be working (p. 85)." This fact could mean that there will be a proportionate rise in the number of children who will need supervision outside the home.

Many mothers who are not employed believe that their children benefit from early group experiences. Others desire this early group experience for their children, but cannot afford it. On the other hand, many unemployed and employed mothers do not provide good home environments. Much of the difficulty that children from these environments

exhibit in later years reflects their preschool experiences. Group child care experiences could provide a happier beginning for these children. Saver (1967) stated that "day care is an important responsibility for community, state, and nation because it affects both the physical and the intellectual status of many of our next generation of citizens (p. 30)." It appears that there is a need for greatly expanded and extended child care services in the community.

#### Statement of Problem

Gaston County, North Carolina, is highly industrialized. Many mills employ mothers. On February 15, 1970, the Gastonia Gazette stated that "8,216 families live on less than \$3,000." Gaston Community Action went to the poor in the slum areas of that county trying to ascertain what caused poverty. Lack of day care facilities for children was mentioned frequently as a cause of poverty because many mothers could not work to supplement the father's income.

Cramerton is a small textile community in Gaston County and many mothers of preschool children work the three shifts in textile plants. Care in the home for preschool children was given by grandparents, neighbors, maids, teenage baby sitters, and parents who work on different shifts.

Since there was no local child care center available, concerned citizens were considering the plight of the working mothers and of those mothers who were not employed, but

would like for their children to have group experiences in a child care center. It was envisioned by these citizens that through the development of neighborhood facilities, group child care would become accessible to families who needed it. Much information was needed in order to meet the needs of the young mothers and their preschool children. The concerned citizens wanted to know: if mothers would support a child care center; what kind of center they needed; whether they wanted educational programs, or centers for babysitting and for custodial care; how the parents thought that the center should be financed.

It was believed that the findings of such a study could be of value to the citizens of Cramerton, North Carolina, in making a decision regarding the importance of opening a child care center.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purposes of the study were to determine: (1) the need for child care centers in a small textile community; (2) the types of centers preferred; and (3) the services and treatment expected in such centers.

#### Definitions of Terms Used

Terms used in the study were as follows:

Mother. Mothers of preschoolers who lived in Cramerton, North Carolina, at the time of the study.

Substitute respondent. A person not originally designated for an interview.

Interview schedule. An instrument designed by the investigator to ascertain parental opinions.

Shifts. The three eight-hour periods in which employees worked. The hours for each shift were as follows: First--6 A.M. to 2 P.M.; second--2 P.M. to 10 P.M.; third--10 P.M. to 6 A.M.

### Study Design

An Interview Schedule was developed to ascertain the opinions of mothers toward the need for a child care center, the kind of center preferred and the treatment expected in a center (See Appendix). A personal data sheet was used to obtain the following information: (1) education and occupation of the parents; (2) number of preschoolers presently attending a child care center; (3) other types of child care presently used by mothers; and (4) numbers and ages of their children (See Appendix ). The researcher administered the Interview Schedule and the personal data sheet in the homes of the 50 mothers of preschoolers who lived in Cramerton, North Carolina.

Data were analyzed descriptively. Based on the data secured, recommendations for adequate child care centers in Cramerton were made.

### Limitations of the Study

The following limitations were stated in relation to the study.

1. The study was limited to 50 mothers who had children of preschool age. This age limit was selected because of the special importance of child care arrangements that young children require, though it was recognized that the needs of older children should not be overlooked.

2. The study was further limited to families who lived in Cramerton, North Carolina.



## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Growing urbanization, a rising number of employed mothers, and an increasing knowledge about the importance of the early years of a child's life as a basis for later development have influenced more and more mothers to seek group child care activities for their children.

Research has shown that there are many kinds of group child care from which a mother may choose. Confusion exists on the part of the general public about child care programs. Burgess (1961) quoted a young mother who was looking for a good pre-school group as saying, "I don't know how to start looking (p. 1)." According to Osborn (1968) no research, to date, indicates a one best way to help a child develop social skills, to develop an adequate self-concept, and to develop cognitive abilities.

Most mothers want to safeguard their children and to ensure an adequate program for them. This fact, therefore, placed a tremendous responsibility upon the mother in choosing a pleasant atmosphere which would fit the needs of her children. To find a suitable program, a parent should make an objective appraisal of available child care centers, the child's individual personality and needs, and the family's assets, and then choose the school which can meet these

needs. The review of literature, therefore, was concerned primarily with the variety of preschool programs which were used by parents for the good of their small children. Information concerning nursery schools was discussed first, and studies concerned with child care facilities in the United States followed.

### Nursery Schools

Leeper (1968) said that "nursery schools have developed to meet the educational needs of children too young for kindergarten (p. 5)." Gore (1963) stated the educational experiences were provided for the child "according to his developmental needs and interest (p. 19)." Fisher (1963) said that nursery school education began in the nineteenth century when "Robert Owen, a mill owner, took a stand to give the very young children of the working classes the educational environment they lacked (p. 199)." According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children many nursery schools were operated by: (1) private owners; (2) cooperative parent and teachers; (3) social or health agencies; (4) religious groups; (5) day care centers for children of working parents; and (6) those concerned with handicapped children (Questions and Answers, NAEYC).

Morgan (1970) said that the nursery school ". . . usually refers to a half-day program . . . (p. 43)." According to Law (1964) nursery schools are for children who

are "working endlessly at the tasks of being human (p. 30)." Prescott and Jones (1971) reported that "Nursery school . . . is designed to supplement, not substitute for, the experiences provided by a good home (p. 55)."

Hughes (1969) discussed senior high school nursery laboratories in which students helped care for 12 to 15 children who came to the home economics laboratory from 9:00 A.M. to 2:15 P.M. The aim was to "help students see characteristics of each age group (p. 13)."

#### Campus Nursery School

Morgan (1967) stated that campus nursery schools focused on the training of college students who plan to work with young children. The nursery is in operation for only part of the day. Research is often carried on at the center.

At a Syracuse Infant Center (Kazickas, 1970) researchers studied the effects of care which aimed to enrich the intellectual and psychological development of children from low-income families. Studies made at the center indicated that infant day care did not jeopardize the emotional attachment of the child to his mother.

A grant was made to the University of North Carolina at Greensboro for the establishment of a Demonstration Center, and for evaluation of the nursery center (Keister, 1969). The project hoped to take a new look at possible

alternatives for infant care and that "quality care" could be defined and demonstrated. The result indicated that there was no differences between the control babies and the nursery babies; neither group was superior on mental tests and on the social development scale.

#### Comparison of Nursery Schools and Child Care Centers

Sugarman (1970) stated that the major difference between a good day care program and a good nursery school program is the fact that nursery schools are for the education of children, and day care's primary focus is for the care and protection of children. Leeper (1968) said that a good center offered a program like that of a good nursery school. Prescott and Jones (1971) found that "group day care used the nursery school, not the home, as its model (p. 54)." Beer (1957) stated, "The child-care or day care center really is a nursery school with some concessions because so many of the mothers work (p. 23)." Sugarman (1968) reported that day care services provide care for infants, preschool, and school age children who must be outside their home when parents are in training programs or when parents are employed. Winston (1965) stressed that nursery school programs are essentially for the training, education, and development of preschool children.

### Child Care Centers

Leeper (1968) wrote that full-day supervision was provided at day care centers. The Children's Bureau (1964) gave the following information about day care centers: both public and voluntary agencies such as state public welfare agency, a settlement house, a church, a United Fund or Community Chest organization offered day care programs. The ways in which day care is different are: (1) it is a service program; (2) the fees are based on parents' ability to pay; (3) it offers counseling service by caseworkers; and (4) services by public welfare agencies may receive federal, state, and local funds. According to Abramson (1970) the centers are often associated with settlement houses or other community agencies.

Prescott and Jones (1970) conducted a study to analyze differences in daily programs offered to children. They found: (a) marked differences among day care centers in the variety and quality of experiences available to the children; (b) that the differences in the behavior of teachers and in their style of presenting activities were associated with the attitudes and training of staff, the quality of physical space, and the center's size; (c) wide age grouping of children in day care centers whereas in nursery schools the children are more nearly grouped according to age; and (d) that group day care tends to provide a set of experiences somewhat different from those provided in family homes.



Butler (1970) stated that quality day care programs include the following: (1) educational programs are appropriate; (2) adequate staffing is available; (3) social, health and nutrition services are available; (4) the physical facilities are safe and hygienic; and (5) parents are involved in the program.

Delli Quadri (1964) said that "when day care centers were placed in an area close to low income families and fees were kept in reach of these families, waiting list run high (p. 9)." Ribicoff (1965) stated, "All in all, 49 states are now supporting some form of day care (p. 53)."

#### Industrial Day Care Centers

Some employers have sought to reduce absenteeism and costly turnover of female employees by providing company-operated day care centers at a nominal cost to the mothers. In North Carolina, at least three textile companies have established successful day care operations. At the Mr. Apparel plant in High Point preschoolers above the age of two are cared for while the plant is in operation.

The Vanderbilt Shirt Company in Asheville (Scarborough, 1971) opened a day care center for children from 18 months old to school age.

The third and largest was the Skyland Mills \$100,000.00 day care center in Morganton (Denny, 1969). The center served the three plants which make Buster Brown children's



clothing. Mr. W. R. Loftis, president of the company for many years, believed that since industry employs many mothers of preschool children, it should bear some responsibility toward providing day care for those children. Working closely with the Day Care Services of the North Carolina Department of Social Services, the resources and information necessary for the establishment of an effective center were assimilated. The center was big enough to accommodate 118 children, between the ages of two and six. Originally it was for the children of Skyland employees, but later was opened to the public. According to Thompson, personnel manager, most of the advantages experienced have been intangible and hard to measure. Attendance and production had increased, and mothers who wanted their children to attend the center were hired. Great amount of publicity resulted, and community relations increased. Skyland planned to continue the program.

From the review of literature, it was apparent that mothers had a variety of group child care programs from which to choose. Mothers should make an objective appraisal of child care centers which are available and select the center which meets the needs of her child and of her family.

### CHAPTER III

#### PROCEDURES

The study was designed to determine the need for child care centers, the type of center preferred, and the service expected from a center in the small textile community of Cramerton, North Carolina. The study was limited to mothers who had children of preschool age and who lived in Cramerton.

A minister in Cramerton, North Carolina, approached the investigator and informed her that his congregation was contemplating the opening of a child care center in Cramerton. A committee from Barium Spring, North Carolina, Child Development Center evaluated the church facilities for such a center. The minister wanted to know how the mothers would react to such a center.

#### The Instrument

An interview schedule (See Appendix), was developed to determine the need for a child care center; the type of center preferred; and the treatment expected in a center.

The interview schedule was composed of four major sections. Demographic information was obtained from the first section. Opinions concerning the need for a child center were secured from section two. Sections three and

four elicited responses related to types of child centers and services needed.

Selected faculty members at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and the Director of Gaston Community Day Care Centers, Inc. were asked to respond to the interview schedule, to rate statements for their clarity and appropriateness, and to suggest additional items which were important. The revised form, which consisted of 39 items, was pretested by a panel of twelve students at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte to determine the clarity of the questions. The need for minor changes was indicated and revisions were made.

#### Population and Sample

The mothers who had children of preschool age, and who lived in Cramerton, North Carolina, were selected as respondents. The names and addresses of 93 mothers were secured from students in grades 1-9 at the Cramerton School, and from the ministers of the six churches in Cramerton. These names were listed alphabetically, and beginning with number two, alternate names were contacted as a possible subject. There was a total of 46 names, and in order to have 50 respondents, four more names were drawn, beginning with number one and taking every other name.

Before substitutions were made for the mothers who did not participate, two attempts were made to contact the originally designated respondents.

#### Collection of Data

The researcher made 82 visits in an attempt to interview the fifty respondents. Twenty-two substitutions were made because some families had moved; others were not at home; a few had no interest in cooperating; children were not the right age; and illness of the child kept one mother from participating.

As a convenience to the mothers and to the researcher, appointments were made with the respondents who had telephones. The interview schedule was administered to the mothers at their homes. The cover page was completed by the mothers, and each item, thereafter, was typed on a separate card which was given one at a time to the respondent.

The instructions were the same: reading together the first instructions, and reminding the respondents that their names were not to be written on the interview schedule. The mothers were told that there were no right or wrong answers, and they should reflect their true feelings in answering each item. The investigator recorded the respondents' answers on a worksheet, and noted any additional attitudinal comments.

### Procedure for Data Analysis

The purposes of the study were to determine: (1) the need for a child care center in a small textile community; (2) the type of center preferred; and (3) the kinds of services and treatment expected from the center. The items pertaining to the appropriate objective were grouped together. The responses were tabulated and the data were analyzed. Percentages and frequencies were obtained for most items. Based on the data secured, recommendations for a child care center in Cramerton, North Carolina, were made.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS OF DATA

The major objectives of this study were to determine: (1) the need for a child care center in the small textile community of Cramerton, North Carolina; (2) the type of center preferred by the mothers; and (3) the treatment expected in a center. The data for this study were obtained from 50 mothers who had children of preschool age and who resided in Cramerton.

The analysis of data were presented in relation to the interview schedule information as follows:

1. Demographic information concerning educational status of the parents; numbers and ages of children in the family; parental employment and occupations; and types of child care presently used by mothers;
2. Mothers' opinions concerning the need for a child care center;
3. Responses relating to types of child care center preferred; and
4. Mothers' responses relating to treatment and services expected in a center.



## Demographic Information

### Concerning the Families

The sample for this study included 50 mothers who had preschool children and resided in Cramerton, North Carolina. Approximately eight per cent of the mothers lived in a section occupied by non-white residents.

Education of parents. Fifty-four per cent of the mothers had eleven or more years of school. The median grade for the mothers was 11.5, and the median grade for the fathers was 12. Three fathers had completed two years of college education; one was a college graduate; one was a medical school graduate; and two were college students. Three mothers had completed two years of business; one was a college graduate; and one was engaged in "student teaching."

Number and ages of children. A total of 126 children, 75 boys and 52 girls, were living in the 50 homes. Seventy-one children, 56 per cent, were of preschool age. The median age for the boys was five years, and seven years was the median age for the girls. Fifteen mothers had one child each; nine mothers had two children each; fifteen mothers had three children each; nine mothers had four children each; one mother had five children; and one mother had seven children.

Employed mothers had exactly the same number of children as did the unemployed mothers. The 24 employed mothers had a total of 63 children as did the 26 unemployed mothers.

The employed mothers had an average of 2.6 children each and the average for the unemployed mothers was 2.4.

Employment. The number of working mothers in Cramerton was almost as large as the number who were not employed. Specifically, 52 per cent of the mothers interviewed were unemployed, as compared with the 48 per cent who were employed. Approximately 81 per cent of the unemployed mothers said, however, that they would become employed if suitable child care were available.

Occupations. Eighty-three per cent of the mothers were employed in textile mills. One mother was employed in each of the following occupations: clerk, saleswoman, waitress, and maid. One unemployed mother was contemplating the early completion of a degree from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, and would be prepared to teach school. Another mother was attending Gaston College, and a third mother was enrolled in a nursing program.

The fathers were engaged in a variety of occupations. Fifty-nine per cent were employed in the textile plants. Approximately seven per cent were salesmen; four per cent were employed in each of the following occupations: construction, truck drivers, policemen, airlines, and Southern Bell Company. One person was employed in each of the following: mechanic, service station attendant, physician, soldier, golf course attendant, and tire recapper. One husband was deceased and one was in prison. The occupations of

the fathers who did not live at home were not indicated. From the five families in which the father had completed at least two years of college education, only one mother was employed. In the two families where the father was a college student, one wife worked, but the other was also a student. The three mothers who had graduated from a two-year business college and the mother who was a college graduate were not employed.

Child care used by employed mothers. In order to obtain basic data on types of child care arrangements made by mothers, the respondents were asked what kind of arrangements they made for their preschoolers. As mothers may make more than one kind of arrangement for a given child, the question referred to the type care used for the longest period of time during the day. For instance, a mother may arrange for a neighbor to care for one child for a period of 30 minutes until the father arrived. The "father" was the type care designated for the survey.

Employed mothers used five kinds of child care arrangements for their children (Table 1). The predominant role of the family in providing child care while the mother worked was readily apparent. Twenty-one per cent of the mothers specified "husband" as the older member of the family who cared for preschoolers.

It was not clarified whether the neighbor and the baby sitter cared for the child in the home or in someone

Table 1

Number and Per Cent of Responses to Types  
of Child Care Presently Used for  
Preschool Children by  
Employed Mothers

| Child Care Used        | Total Number of<br>Employed Mothers<br>N = 24 | Per Cent |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------|
| Older Member of Family | 14                                            | 60       |
| Neighbor               | 2                                             | 8        |
| Baby Sitter            | 2                                             | 8        |
| Day Care Center        | 4                                             | 16       |
| Nursery                | 1                                             | 4        |
| Older Friend           | 1                                             | 4        |

else's home. One mother, who had several children, worked with her husband on the third shift. When they arrived at home, the father went to sleep, the mother cared for the children and did the housework until 2:00 P.M. At this time, the father cared for the children, and the mother slept until 9:00 P.M.; then she dressed for work, and picked up the lady who slept with the children. The mother punched the time clock at the mill at 10:00 P.M.

Care used by unemployed mothers. Child care arrangements which were specified were similar to those used by employed mothers. Older members of the family, mothers, older friend and sister were designated. Only four of the

26 unemployed mothers used group care in a child care center for their preschoolers. The fact that group child care was used by 18 per cent of the mothers did not indicate the need for centers because the mothers could be satisfied with the present arrangements. A better indication of the need for such a center was the fact that 94 per cent of the mothers said they would use the center if such were available and 74 per cent would use it while they worked.

#### How Mothers Would Use a Child Care Center

The interview schedule (See Appendix) consisted of eleven questions which measured the mothers' opinions by their answering "yes," "occasionally," or "no" to statements which showed how they would use a child care center if such were available. (Table 2).

Six mothers said they had no way of knowing if they would be able to work more regularly if a child care center adjoined their place of employment because they were not employed. One subject said that she never made business trips. Many mothers remarked that they would never think of taking a vacation without the children.

#### Type of Center Preferred

Portions of the fourth part of the Interview Schedule were designed to check the accuracy of the mothers' responses in Part III (See Appendix). The analysis of the data is presented by discussing the responses to related questions in Parts III and IV together.



Table 2

Per Cent of Responses Showing How Mothers  
Would Use a Child Care Center If  
Such Were Available  
N = 50

| Item                                                                                                             | Per Cent |      |    |       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|------|----|-------|
|                                                                                                                  | Yes      | Occ. | No | Blank |
| 1. Would you like to have a child care center available for your preschool children?                             | 82       | 14   | 2  | 2     |
| 2. Would your preschool child attend a child care center if one were available?                                  | 68       | 26   | 6  |       |
| 3. Would you leave your preschool child in a child care center while you work?                                   | 78       | 12   | 10 |       |
| 4. Would you prefer that employers operate a licensed center adjoining your place of employment?                 | 50       | 4    | 38 | 8     |
| 5. Would you become employed if suitable child care were available?                                              | 68       | 8    | 6  | 18    |
| 6. Would you be able to work more regularly if there was a child care center adjoining your place of employment. | 58       | 6    | 24 | 12    |
| 7. Would you leave preschool children in a child care center when there is serious illness in the family?        | 36       | 20   | 44 |       |
| 8. Would you like to leave preschool children in a center while you are on a business trip?                      | 22       | 22   | 54 | 2     |
| 9. Would you like to leave preschool children in a center during vacation?                                       | 10       | 10   | 80 |       |



Table 2 (continued)

Per Cent of Responses Showing How Mothers  
Would Use a Child Care Center If  
Such Were Available  
N = 50

| Item                                                                                                                                                              | Per Cent |      |    |       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|------|----|-------|
|                                                                                                                                                                   | Yes      | Occ. | No | Blank |
| 10. Would you like for child care centers to operate 24 hours a day so that you could choose the time to fit your hours at work?                                  | 82       | 2    | 14 | 2     |
| 11. Would you prefer that centers remain open for seven days a week so that you could have some place to leave your child when you work or shop over the weekend? | 80       | 6    | 14 |       |

Since there is much debate about whether the goal of a child care center should be essentially educational or a playschool, six questions were asked to obtain the opinions from the mothers.

The responses indicated that mothers were ambiguous about whether a center should be for educational reasons or for a playschool. Seventy-four per cent said that the main purpose of a center should be for baby sitting and education. Seventy-eight per cent said they agreed that centers should be established for the education and the training of children. One hundred per cent agreed or strongly agreed that centers should have books, puzzles, blocks and music for children. Fifty-four per cent agreed that there should be real educational programs (Table 3).

Table 3

Per Cent of Responses Concerning Whether  
the Child Care Center Should Be  
Essentially Educational  
or a Playschool  
N = 50

| Item                                                                                                 | Per Cent |    |   |    |    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----|---|----|----|
|                                                                                                      | SD       | D  | N | A  | SA |
| 1. Centers should be established primarily for the education and the training of preschool children. | 2        | 16 | 4 | 74 | 4  |
| 2. Centers should have books, puzzles, blocks, and music for the children.                           |          |    |   | 56 | 44 |
| 3. Child care centers should not be expected to have any real educational programs for children.     | 14       | 40 | 4 | 40 | 2  |
| 4. Child care centers should be "play-school" with no definite "three R" curriculum.                 | 6        | 34 | 8 | 46 | 6  |
| 5. Learning to get along with others is the best reason for a child to attend a child care center.   |          | 8  | 6 | 70 | 16 |

On the other hand, 52 per cent of the mothers said that child care centers should be playschool with no definite "three R" curriculum. Eighty-six per cent agreed that learning to get along with others is the best reason for a child to attend a child care center. The mothers were giving little thought to the questions and to the answers they gave, or they misunderstood the statement.

Three questions were asked concerning whether or not the center should be licensed, whether the teachers should be trained, and whether there should be male and female teachers. These were included to determine how mothers felt about the facility and the leaders who worked with their children (Table 4).

Ninty-six per cent of the mothers agreed that child care centers should be licensed. Fifty-four per cent wanted the center to adjoin their place of employment. Sponsors for the center were chosen as follows: 24 per cent--employers; 46 per cent--churches; 6 per cent--schools; 6 per cent--private owners; and 14 per cent believed that parents in the community should sponsor the center. Seventy-six per cent of the mothers felt that men and women teachers should work at the center.

Teachers preferred. The mothers were aware that trained staff was an asset. They were not in agreement, however, as to the composition of the staff. For instance, 34 per cent of the mothers stated that young mothers should work with a trained leader; 28 per cent believed that the staff should be "women with short training," and 26 per cent agreed that the staff should consist of "certified" teachers (Table 5). It was interesting to note that only two mothers felt that the employees should be "untrained people who are naturally good with preschoolers."

Table 4  
 Per Cent of Responses Given to Indicate  
 the Type of Center Preferred  
 N = 50

| Item                                                                                                                                                                                 | Per Cent |    |    |    |    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----|----|----|----|
|                                                                                                                                                                                      | SD       | D  | N  | A  | SA |
| 1. Child care centers should be licensed to insure quality care for your child.                                                                                                      | 2        |    | 2  | 52 | 44 |
| 2. Child care centers should provide guidance for parents in understanding how children grow.                                                                                        | 2        | 4  | 10 | 72 | 12 |
| 3. Child care centers should provide men and women teachers for children.                                                                                                            |          | 20 | 4  | 74 | 2  |
| 4. Centers should serve as a resource center which is kept open in the evening for group meetings, individual conferences, workshops, social activities, and the use of the library. | 2        | 32 | 4  | 54 | 8  |

Table 5

Number and Per Cent of Responses Concerning  
the Types of Teachers Preferred

N = 50

| Teachers                                                   | Number of<br>Respondents | Per Cent |
|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| Neighborhood women and mothers                             | 4                        | 8        |
| Certified teachers                                         | 13                       | 26       |
| Untrained people who are "naturally<br>good with children" | 2                        | 4        |
| Young mothers to work with a trained<br>leader             | 17                       | 34       |
| Women with short training                                  | 14                       | 28       |

#### Types of Services and Treatment

The third objective of the study was to determine the services and treatment expected from child care centers. Thirteen questions dealt with the objective.

Hours, days and months to be opened. Four questions were devoted to the hours, days, and months the center should be opened. The majority of mothers, 58 per cent, thought that centers should be available at least six days a week; however, as high as 80 per cent had agreed earlier that the center should be opened seven days so that the children could be left there when mothers shopped or worked. Even though this was the largest single response, only 48 per



cent said that the center should remain open for 24 hours a day. Eighty-two per cent agreed previously that the center should operate 24 hours a day so that they could choose the time to fit their hours of work (Table 6).

Discipline. Seventy-four per cent agreed that personnel should use strict discipline when they were training children (Table 6). One mother remarked "I am a Sunday school teacher, and if there were no adult standards, the children would tear down the place."

Table 6

Per Cent of Responses Concerning Treatment  
Expected From a Child Care Center  
N = 50

| Items                                                                                             | Per Cent |    |    |    |    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----|----|----|----|
|                                                                                                   | SD       | D  | N  | A  | SA |
| 1. Centers should operate on a twelve months basis.                                               |          | 8  |    | 70 | 22 |
| 2. Personnel should use strict discipline when they are training children.                        | 2        | 18 | 6  | 66 | 8  |
| 3. There should be no adult-imposed standard for the children in child care centers.              | 12       | 40 | 8  | 32 | 8  |
| 4. Programs should foster the child's association with many ages and races.                       | 6        | 10 | 10 | 66 | 8  |
| 5. Experiences in child care centers should help children learn to do most things for themselves. |          | 2  | 4  | 74 | 20 |



Table 6 (continued)

Per Cent of Responses Concerning Treatment  
Expected from a Child Care Center

N = 50

| Items                                                                                                       | Per Cent |    |   |    |    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----|---|----|----|
|                                                                                                             | SD       | D  | N | A  | SA |
| 6. Child care centers should have a place to keep children with colds.                                      | 2        | 8  | 4 | 68 | 18 |
| 7. Children in centers should be grouped according to age.                                                  |          | 10 | 2 | 56 | 32 |
| 8. Parents and professional workers should work out together the hours and days the center is to be opened. |          | 4  | 2 | 82 | 12 |
| 9. Parents should help with needed work at the center                                                       | 2        | 12 | 4 | 74 | 8  |
| 10. Children should be examined by a doctor before they are admitted to child care centers.                 | 2        | 8  | 2 | 54 | 34 |

Fees. Thirty-eight per cent of the mothers believed that fees should be based on the parents' ability to pay. Thirty-six per cent thought the fees should be the same for all children. Fourteen per cent thought that the fees should be charged according to the number of siblings enrolled in the center. Fifty-six per cent of the mothers believed that financial support of centers should be provided by direct fees paid by parents, but 26 per cent thought that taxes should provide support.

### Other Services and Treatment

The majority of the mothers wanted at least two meals and a snack served. Forty-two per cent believed that breakfast, snacks, lunch and dinner should be served. Twenty-six per cent wanted breakfast, snack, and lunch to be served. Sixteen per cent agreed that snack and lunch were sufficient. Most mothers thought, however, that the hours for the center to be opened would help determine the food to be served. Seventy-four per cent wanted the center to have children of different ages and races, but 88 per cent agreed that the children should be grouped according to age. Fifty-four per cent wanted the center to be available for children from ages three months to five years old.

The findings from the data obtained were used to make recommendations. The mothers expressed a great need for a child center in Cramerton, and they would support one if it were available. The mothers wanted a center which would be licensed and sponsored by a church; which would have trained staff of women and men; and would be available 24 hours a day throughout the year. Even though the mothers were not in total agreement that a center should be for educational purpose, they did agree that centers should have equipment which fosters the creativity and cognitive development of children.

The summary and implications are presented in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

The attitudes of mothers of preschoolers toward child care centers have been given consideration in order that recommendations can be made for opening a child care center in Cramerton, North Carolina. Determining the expectations of mothers whose preschool children would attend such a center was the first step in planning a center which would fit the needs of the mothers and preschoolers in the community.

#### The Problem

The purposes of the study were to determine: (1) the need for a child care center in a small textile community; (2) the type of center the parents preferred; and (3) the treatment and services expected from such a center.

The investigator believed that this study could be of value to concerned citizens in Cramerton, North Carolina, as they made a decision regarding a child care center.

#### Limitations

The study was limited to mothers who had children of preschool age and who lived in Cramerton, North Carolina.

### Design

An interview schedule, based on the review of literature, was developed to determine the need for a child care center, the type of center preferred, and the treatment expected in a center. A personal data sheet was included to obtain demographic information.

The names and addresses of all mothers who had preschool children and who lived in Cramerton, North Carolina, were obtained from the students enrolled in grades 1-9 in the Cramerton Schools and from the ministers of the six churches in Cramerton.

The interview schedule and the personal data sheet were administered in the homes of the 50 subjects. After two attempts were made to contact the originally designated respondents, twenty-two substitutions were made.

### Major Findings

Major findings of the study in relation to the need for a child care center in a small textile community, the type of center preferred, and the services and treatment expected in such a center were:

1. More than one half of the children living at home were of preschool age. Of the 126 children, 71 were of preschool age.
2. Employed mothers had the same number of children as did the unemployed mothers. The 24 employed mothers had

63 children which averaged 2.6 children each. The 26 unemployed mothers had 63 children which averaged 2.4 children each.

3. Fifty-two per cent of the mothers were unemployed. Eighty-three per cent of the employed mothers worked in the textile plants. Fifty-nine per cent of the fathers worked in the mills.

4. Eighty-one per cent of the unemployed mothers said that they would become employed if suitable child care were available.

5. Fourteen of the 24 mothers used an older member of the family to care for the preschool children. Other children were cared for by neighbors, baby sitters, and friends. Only nine of the 50 mothers had enrolled their children in a child care center.

6. Ninety-six of the subjects wanted a child care center, and would use such a center if one were available.

7. The mothers would use the center for the following reasons: (a) employment; (b) when there was serious illness in the family; (c) during a business trip; (d) during vacations; and (e) for shopping or working over the weekend.

8. The mothers wanted a licensed center. Ninety-six per cent agreed on this statement.



9. Fifty-four per cent preferred that employers operate a licensed center adjoining their place of employment.

10. Teachers should be trained women and men. Young mothers who would work with a trained leader were preferred.

11. The mothers stated that the center should be available 24 hours a day, 12 months a year.

12. Fifty-four per cent of the mothers agreed that children from the ages of three months to six years should be allowed to attend the center, but the children would be grouped according to age.

13. Mothers stated that children should be examined by a doctor before being admitted to the center, and that provisions be made in the center for children who had colds.

14. The majority of the mothers wanted at least two meals and a snack served at the center. Forty-two per cent believed that breakfast, snacks, lunch, and dinner should be served.

The findings indicated that mothers wanted a licensed center which employed trained men and women teachers. The mothers would like to work with the staff in establishing the hours and days to be opened, and they would help with the work of the center. The program should have educational activities as well as free play periods.

### Implications

Implications drawn from the study were as follows:

1. Concerned citizens who are interested in opening a child care center in Cramerton, North Carolina, should encourage the organization of a committee to design and implement such a center.
2. The occupations of the parents in the community should be considered when determining the location of the center.
3. The mothers could use the building for group meetings, individual conferences, workshops, social activities, and as a library. Children could be left at the center while mothers worked; when there was serious illness in a family; during vacations; and for shopping or working over the week end.
4. Ninety-six per cent of the mothers believed that the center should be licensed. A knowledge of requirements for licensing a center could be helpful when planning the facility; establishing the program to be used; employing teachers; and deciding upon the number of children to be enrolled.

### Further Research

Further research would be helpful as a basis for recommending the type of child care center which would be most beneficial for the parents and the children in the community.

1. A study comparing the fathers' opinions with the mothers' opinions would be beneficial. The fathers' opinions could influence the attendance of their children in a child care center.

2. A study to ascertain whether or not the mothers were satisfied with the present arrangements for the care of their children would reveal the need for a center.

3. Continuous evaluation of all aspects of a child care center is essential if the program is to meet the needs of the community.

Any generalizations based on the significance of this study should be related to groups composed of mothers from a small textile community, and who had children of preschool age.



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## APPENDIX

## INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Number of children in your family\_\_\_\_\_

Boys\_\_\_\_\_ ages\_\_\_\_\_

Girls\_\_\_\_\_ ages\_\_\_\_\_

Father's occupation\_\_\_\_\_

Full time\_\_\_\_\_ part time\_\_\_\_\_

Mother's occupation\_\_\_\_\_

Full time\_\_\_\_\_ part time\_\_\_\_\_

Father's education: elementary\_\_\_\_\_ attended college\_\_\_\_\_

Attended high school\_\_\_\_\_ college graduate\_\_\_\_\_

High school graduate\_\_\_\_\_ other (specify)\_\_\_\_\_

Number of children presently enrolled in a child care center\_\_\_\_\_

Nursery school\_\_\_\_\_ kindergarten\_\_\_\_\_ other\_\_\_\_\_

Type of child care presently used for preschool children by employed mothers

Older member of family\_\_\_\_\_ neighbor\_\_\_\_\_ student\_\_\_\_\_

Maid\_\_\_\_\_ other (specify)\_\_\_\_\_

Directions: In the following series of questions we are anxious to find out exactly what you think about child care centers for preschool children. There is no "right" or "wrong" about any of the answers, and there is no "score" to be obtained. This is not a test, but frankly and simply a survey of opinions. Please do not put down what you think you should feel, but what you do believe.

Part I. After each question check "yes" or "no" or "occasionally."

YES OCC. NO

1. Would you like to have a child care center available for your preschool children?

YES OCC. NO

2. Would your preschool child attend a child care center if one were available?
3. Would you leave your preschool child in a child care center while you work?
4. Would you prefer that employers operate a licensed center adjoining your place of employment?
5. Would you become employed if suitable child care were available?
6. Would you be able to work more regularly if there were a child care center adjoining your place of employment?
7. Would you leave preschool children in a child care center when there is serious illness in the family?
8. Would you like to leave preschool children in a child care center while you are on a business trip?
9. Would you like to leave preschool children in a child care center during your vacation?
10. Would you like for child care centers to operate 24 hours a day so that you could choose the time to fit your hours at work?
11. Would you prefer that child care centers remain open for seven days a week so that you could have some place to leave your children when you work or shop over the weekend?

Part II. After reading the following statements, you will know in most cases, whether you agree or disagree with each statement. If you agree, place an "x" under "agree" or "strongly agree." If you disagree, place an "x" under "disagree" or "strongly disagree." Try to avoid "neutral." Your opinion is important--so please answer each statement according to your true feeling.

SD D N A SA

1. Child care centers should be licensed to insure quality care for the child.



SD D N A SA

2. Children should be examined by a doctor before they are admitted to child care centers.
3. Child care centers should have a place to keep children with colds.
4. Children in child care centers should be grouped according to age.
5. Centers should have books, puzzles, blocks, and music for the children.
6. Programs should foster the child's association with many ages and races.
7. Child care centers should not be expected to have any real educational programs for children.
8. Child care centers should provide men and women teachers for children.
9. Experiences in child care centers should help children learn to do most things for themselves.
10. Child care centers should provide guidance for parents in understanding how children grow.
11. Learning to get along with others is the best reason for a child to attend a child care center.
12. Personnel should use strict discipline when they are training children.
13. Child care centers should be "play-school" with no definite "three R" curriculum.
14. Centers should operate on a twelve month basis.
15. Centers should be established primarily for the education and the training of preschool children.

SD D N A SA

16. Centers should serve as a resource center which is kept open in the evening for group meetings, individual conferences, workshops, social activities, and the use of the library.
17. Parents and professional workers should work out the hours and the number of days the center should be open.
18. Parents should help with needed work at the center.
19. There should be no adult-imposed standards for the children in child care centers.

Part III. In each of the following, you are given a preliminary statement which can be completed or answered in any one of six ways. Check the one which would most closely fill your need and approximates your own choice.

1. Child care centers for preschools should be available for children from the ages:
  - (a) three months to five years old.
  - (b) one to five years old.
  - (c) two to five years old.
  - (d) three to five years old.
  - (e) four to five years old.
  - (f) other.
2. Child care centers should stay open:
  - (a) five to seven hours a day.
  - (b) eight to ten hours a day.
  - (c) twelve to fourteen hours a day.
  - (d) sixteen to eighteen hours a day.
  - (e) twenty to twenty-four hours a day.
  - (f) other.
3. Child care centers should be available:
  - (a) three days a week.
  - (b) four days a week.
  - (c) five days a week.
  - (d) six days a week.
  - (e) seven days a week.
  - (f) other.

4. These centers should be sponsored by:
  - (a) companies which employ mothers.
  - (b) churches.
  - (c) schools.
  - (d) private owners.
  - (e) parents in the community.
  - (f) other.
5. Employees should be:
  - (a) ladies and mothers in the neighborhood.
  - (b) certified teachers.
  - (c) untrained people who are "naturally good with children."
  - (d) young mothers to work with a trained leader.
  - (e) ladies who have had short training courses in working with children.
  - (f) other.
6. Financial support of child care centers should be provided by:
  - (a) taxes.
  - (b) direct fees paid by parents.
  - (c) employers of the mother.
  - (d) parents who pool talents and money and help in fund raising projects.
  - (e) church missions.
  - (f) other.
7. If parents pay for child care centers, fees should be:
  - (a) based on parents' ability to pay.
  - (b) the same fee for all children.
  - (c) based upon the number of brothers and sisters enrolled.
  - (d) other.
8. Food at the center should include:
  - (a) breakfast and lunch.
  - (b) snack and lunch.
  - (c) breakfast, snacks, lunch and dinner.
  - (d) breakfast, snack and lunch.
  - (e) lunch and dinner.
  - (f) other.

9. The main purpose of a center should be:
- (a) for educational training of children.
  - (b) for baby sitting care while parents work.
  - (c) for playschool.
  - (d) for partnership with parents in rearing children.
  - (e) for baby sitting care and educational training.
  - (f) other.